(e) whether Govt. are thinking of repealing the Handloom Reservation Act, 1986?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Sathyam Committee submitted its report on 3rd August, 1999.

(b) to (e) The Expert Committee Constitute under the Chairmanship of Shri S.R. Sathyam to, *inter alia,* review the impack of the existing Textile Policy and suggest policy measures for the industry to focus on changes resulting from over-all trade policy reforms, drew up its report after wide consultation with institutions and organisations representing the various sectors of the industry, including State Governments. The Development Commissioner (Handloom) was one of the member of the Committee. The recommendations of the Committee including those on handlooms, focus on measures to secure progressive increase in production and exportable surplus, removal of technological obsolescenece, strengthening of the competitive framework of all segments of the textile industry, removal of avoidable regulations and facilitation for orderly transition of the industry to that of a market oriented forward looking industry. These are being taken into account in framing the New Textile Policy. The New Textile Policy is under consideration.

**Safeguarding the interests of Cotton Growing Farmers**

3519. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether cotton is growing in huge quantity in Gujarat;

(b) whether the farmers do not get adequate price of cotton;

(c) whether the Central Government purchased cotton of Rs. 11 crores from Gujarat but the payment has not been made to them;

(d) whether Government propose to enhance the rate of cotton so that farmers may not be frustrated; and

(e) if not, in what way the Government propose to safeguard the interests of cotton growing farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (e) Gujarat is one of the major cotton growing states in India. During last cotton season 1998-99 (October-September) 47 lakh bales (of 170 kg. each) of cotton was produced. As per estimates of the Cotton Advisory Board (in its meeting held on 10.3.2000) the production during the current cotton year 1999-2000 in Gujarat is likely to be 35 lakh bales. To safeguard the interests of the cotton growing farmers, the Government announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Kapas (seed cotton) every year taking into account costs of all inputs and a reasonable margin of profit. In the event of the market price of Kapas falling below the MSP, the Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI), a Public Sector Undertaking of the Government of India, purchases Kapas at MSP without any quantitative limit thus ensuring remunerative prices to the cotton growing farmers. During the current cotton season 1999-2000 market prices of Kapas in Gujarat have been ruling well above the MSP which implies that the farmers are receiving reasonable price for their produce. The Central Government does not purchase cotton, however, the CCI purchases cotton as a part of its commercial operation. During the current cotton season 1999-2000, the CCI has so far (as on 11.4.2000) purchased 91,394 bales valued at Rs. 81.15 crore of cotton and there is no delay in payment to the farmers.

**Decline in Textile Exports**

3520. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether textile exports have declined?

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures proposed to encourage textile industry for increasing the growing of exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No, Sir.